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# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CORTES

AN ILLUSTRATED LECTURE BY

HENRY G. PEABODY

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## Mexican-Spanish Pronunciation and Accent.

a is pronounced like English a in father.

e        "        "        "        a in take.

i        "        "        "        e in be.

o        "        "        "        o in bone.

u        "        "        "        oo in spoon.

j like aspirated h in heal.

ch, same as in chair.

u when preceded by q is always silent.

c is soft before e and i, as in cent.

c is hard before a, o, u, l, r, like English k.

g is hard before a, o, u, l, r, same as in English.

g, before e and i, like aspirated h in heal.

g is silent before ua. Agua is pronounced awa.

h is always silent.

ll as though followed by y. Caballero is pronounced cabalyero.

ñ as though followed by y. Señor is pronounced senyor.

q like k in English. Is only found in the combinations que and qui,  
in which the u is silent.

x usually like s. Tlaxcala is pronounced Tlascala.

y, as consonant, like y in you.

y, as vowel, (meaning "and,") like ee.

Vd., pronounced oostaid, an abbreviation meaning "you."

Other letters are pronounced as in English.

The accent is on the penult in words ending in a vowel, or in n or s; on the last syllable in words ending in a consonant. Exceptions have the accented syllable marked.

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## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CORTES

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IN the great problem of human destiny, whenever a crisis demands the genius of a Napoleon or a Washington, Providence invariably supplies the man to meet it. No chapter in the World's history exemplifies this fact more emphatically than the Mexican conquest; for no other instance is on record where an enterprise of such vastness has been consummated, in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles, by means of resources created by the genius of a single man. In fact, the history of the conquest is necessarily the biography of Hernando Cortés, the Conquistador.

Although the Mexico of today affords few relics of the Spanish conquest, yet one who has read Prescott's narrative will find many familiar landmarks as he follows the route taken by Cortés in his march to the Aztec capital. The steamship journey from New York to Vera Cruz lands the passenger at the very spot where Cortés first set foot in Montezuma's empire. It also affords a visit to Havana, the harbor from which his squadron sailed on its voyage of conquest. Shall we not, then, preface our trip to Mexico with a few glimpses of this typical Spanish city, which, less than 100 years ago was, next to the City of Mexico itself, the most populous in the western hemisphere.

1 Late in the afternoon of a clear and bracing day in January, 1899, the "Orizaba" left her New York pier and steamed out through the Narrows toward the Sandy Hook Lightship. The Lower Bay of New York is one of the principal waterways of the commercial world. In former years our ships and barques sailed the waters of every sea, and carried our commerce to the uttermost corners of the earth. That modern institution, the tramp steamer, has practically driven the picturesque square-rigger from the highways of the sea, but, on rare occasions they are still seen, and as we turn the point of Sandy Hook we pass one, outward bound. To those who love the sea there is always

a fascination in the towering pyramid of patched and weatherbeaten canvas and the stately and majestic motion it imparts to the homely, but substantial, hull beneath. While we are still speculating on the destination and cargo of this relic of bygone days we reach the Sandy Hook Lightship, the pilot leaves us, our captain assumes command of the steamer and turns her prow toward the distant shore of Cuba.

- 2 The sight which greeted our eyes as the "Orizaba" rounded Morro Castle and entered the harbor of Havana was a thrilling one. Only a few days before American troops had taken possession of the fortifications and public buildings of the city. The red and yellow emblem of tyranny had disappeared forever from the last stronghold of that vast empire which formerly acknowledged the authority of Spain over four-fifths of the western hemisphere. And there, above the frowning guns of El Morro, against the deep blue of a tropic sky, proudly floated the Stars and Stripes. One can never fully realize how much he loves the dear old emblem until he sees it in a foreign land.

- 3 Before our anchor had fairly reached the bottom we were beset by a flotilla of small boats, the boatmen pushing and struggling among themselves to be the first to reach the gangway. Coming on board they laid siege to the unsophisticated "passajeros" in a manner that would have afforded pointers to the most importunate crowd of New York hackmen. In some cases it is well to go early to avoid the rush, but in this instance we decided to wait until the rush was over. As our steamer was to remain for several days discharging freight, we would have ample time to view the city.

- 4 Having settled the question of "pesettas" with one of the native boatmen he hoisted sail and we were soon on our way ashore. Our course carried us directly by the wreck of the ill-fated "Maine." All that remained above water of the once beautiful battleship was an unsightly heap of scrap iron, a reminder of one of the most appalling acts of treachery the world has witnessed. In a few minutes we were alongside the wharf and stepped ashore in a city as essentially foreign in its characteristics as though it lay beyond the Atlantic.

- 5 A few minutes walk brought us to a large square, the Plaza de Armas, and facing it stood the palace of the Governor-General, the executive mansion of Cuba. The plaza was filled with tents, for our soldier boys were camped in all the public squares and parks throughout the city. In the centre of the plaza is a statue of Ferdinand VII, on either side of which rise lofty and imposing royal palms, their spreading branches bending gracefully before the breeze, as though in homage to the glorious emblem which floated above the palace tower, proclaiming peace and liberty throughout the land.



- 6 Leaving the palace of the Governor-General a short walk brings us to the Prado, the Broadway of Havana. However narrow and alley-like other Havana streets may be, this is a broad and stately avenue, bordered by imposing buildings and occasional plazas, with grateful shade trees and cooling fountains. In the centre of the block beyond is l'Ingleterra, Havana's Waldorf-Astoria, and, adjoining it on the left, one of the principal theatres of the city. The architecture of Havana buildings is solid and substantial, their portales cool and shady, and their rooms large and airy, while the rattle of the carriages and mule carts over the rough cobble-stone pavement reminds us strikingly of our own New York.
- 7 Crowning a lofty eminence on the opposite shore of Havana Harbor stands La Cabaña, the greatest fortress in the new world, and which cost the treasury of Spain the round sum of fourteen million dollars. When the accounts were presented to the Spanish monarch it is related that he went to his palace window and looked steadily westward. On being asked his reason for so doing he is said to have remarked that he expected to see the castle walls rising above the horizon, since it was large enough to have cost so much. From the water's edge a paved and covered way leads upward to the fortress.
- 8 The main entrance is on the north side toward the ocean. Beyond the drawbridge crossing the moat is a royal gateway bearing the arms of Spain. Over the heavy doors, on a semi-circular tablet of marble, is an inscription giving the date on which the construction of Cabaña was begun, its name, and the names of the various officials engaged in the work. Immediately above this is an enormous shield of brown sandstone, on which are carved the arms of his Catholic Majesty, Carlos III. As we looked upon this massive entrance it seemed that its most fitting inscription would be those portentous words of Dante, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." For, of all the innumerable throngs who have passed within these walls, few there have been who did not, literally, leave hope behind.
- 9 The heights of La Cabaña overlook El Morro, and Antonelli, the engineer who designed the latter fortress, once said while standing here, "He who takes the position of the Cabaña will have the city also." Unfortunately for the Spaniards, however, these prophetic words were not heeded, but were recalled many years after his death, when, from this same hill in 1762, the British attacked the weakest side of the Morro, and captured Havana. The following year, within three months after the evacuation of Havana by the British, work was begun on the castle of Cabaña. It was built by convict labor from Mexico, and was completed in a year. But it was a case of locking

the stable after the horse had been stolen, for, although "El Castillo de San Carlos de la Cabaña" was the greatest fortress in the new world, and mounted more than 200 guns, it has never fired a shot to repel an enemy. Its silent guns speak only to salute an incoming naval vessel, bound on some peaceful errand to the quaint old city.

- 10 As we turned to leave Cabaña the sun was slowly sinking in the west. Its golden rays softened and blended harmoniously the many tinted walls and roofs of the ancient city. The calm surface of the gently heaving sea, breaking softly against the rocky base of the fortress, was overspread with a ruddy glow. And, crowning all, from the Morro's tallest staff, our country's flag waved a silent benediction. Then, as the edge of the slowly sinking sun touched the horizon line, from across the harbor entrance there floated the glorious strains of the "Star Spangled Banner." As the last notes died away, and while the echoes of the sunset gun were still reverberating among the gloomy walls of the Morro, our flag came slowly down, reflecting in its descent the sun's last lingering rays, the harbinger of new light, new life, and liberty for the new Republic.

- 11 As day is breaking upon the final morning of our voyage, we enter the harbor of Vera Cruz, the very spot where the fleet of Cortés first came to anchor on Good Friday, 1519. And the largest Mexican seaport of today is the outgrowth of that first settlement made under the name of La Villa Rica de la Santa Vera Cruz, "The Rich City of the Holy True Cross." One might well wonder what richness the sandy, marshy site of the pioneer settlement promised, but the magnificent and sumptuous gifts of gold and ornamental work here received by Cortés from the envoys of Montezuma undoubtedly suggested that portion of the title. As our steamer comes to anchor a swarm of boatmen hover near, none daring to come on board, however, until the lowering of the health officer's yellow flag announces the inspection over. Then a few minutes suffice to land us at the pier.

- 12 On our way to the railway station we pass several members of the street cleaning department. In one respect this resembles the New York department: its members are all dressed alike. But while the men of the New York brigade wear white uniforms, the Vera Cruz force is dressed in black. Its members also work without salary and find themselves. To Vera Cruzers these useful members of society are known as "zopilotes," but to the American they are simply buzzards, which the city authorities protect by an ordinance providing a heavy penalty for killing them.

- 13 Vera Cruz has one redeeming feature: there is a railway by which we may get away. For the best thing to do after reaching the city of



Vera Cruz is to leave it as soon as possible. In spite of the well directed efforts of the garbage commissioners their number is too small to accomplish the work effectually, and, as Vera Cruz has no special attractions for the visitor, we will seek a higher altitude. The train from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico leaves early in the morning, but as an afternoon train runs to Orizaba, a city at an elevation of 4000 feet, we may arrange to spend the night far above the malaria of the coast.

14 Leaving Vera Cruz, the train runs for fifty miles across the level stretches of the "tierra caliente," or hot country. After crossing a barren and sandy waste we enter a region of exuberant fertility. Dense thickets of aromatic shrubs and flowers are interwoven with a network of tangled vines, while here and there, through some palm-embowered vista, appears a glistening dome, for we are in a land of churches. But in the midst of all this bloom and beauty lurks the hidden malaria, rendering the tierra caliente a "tierra de muerte." From April to November the lowlands should not be entered by those unacclimated, and Americans who have descended from the table-land within these months are quarantined at the border on their return to the United States.

15 As we approach the foothills the scenery grows more beautiful. Rushing streams intersect our pathway, and occasionally we pass a bridge of the ancient highway connecting Vera Cruz with the City of Mexico. One of the most picturesque of these is an old stone arch, moss-grown and hung with vines, which spans the Chiquihuiti. However rough and well-nigh impassable the primitive Spanish roadways may be, the bridges are marvels of strength and durability, while age has given them that ineffable touch of color which harmonizes so perfectly with their tropical environment. After crossing the Chiquihuiti River we begin in earnest our ascent of the foothills, and the tierra caliente, with its swamps and fevers, is left behind us.

16 As we emerge suddenly from a long tunnel, we see, far below, the beautiful fall of Atoyac. Waterfalls, in Mexico, are rare, especially during the winter, or dry season. As the beauty of a jewel is oft-times enhanced by its setting, so does Atoyac apparently gain in lustre from the very density of the impenetrable mass of surrounding verdure. But before we are fairly impressed with the exquisite beauty of this rare and resplendent gem, it has vanished from our sight, and a turn of the magic kaleidoscope brings new and interesting visions.

17 Here and there, peeping out from beneath a waving canopy of spreading palms, we catch a fleeting glimpse of the tile-roofed hut of a native peon. We are now passing through the "tierra templada," or temperate zone of Mexico. One of the most wonderful features of this wonderful country is the fact that, within a single day's ride, we

pass through all the successive climatic changes that exist from Florida to Maine. Instead of following degrees of latitude, however, the zones of Mexico are arranged like a flight of stairs. As we gradually ascend from the coast, we pass successively from the tropics to the pine-fringed expanse of the table-land, above which tower still loftier heights, eternally wreathed in snow and ice.

18 But we must not anticipate, for as yet we have only ascended about one-third of the distance to the table-land. Towards nightfall we reach the station at Córdoba, and as the scenery between Córdoba and Orizaba is too beautiful to be passed in darkness, we will remain over night at the former place, and go on by the morning train. Each town in Mexico has some special article of which it has a sort of monopoly. At Aguas Calientes it is drawn work, at Irapuato strawberries, at Apizaco canes, and at Córdoba pineapples, bananas and other sub-tropical fruits. Mexico is an ancient country. Its settlements were located long before the days of railroads, and, consequently, most Mexican towns are a mile or more distant from the railway station, conveyance being afforded by tram-cars. A ride of ten minutes brings us to "El Gran Hotel America," where we spend our first night in Mexico.

19 With the dawning light of day we step upon the window balcony to view the landscape. Whatever else of our tour in Mexico may fade from memory, this matchless scene will never be forgotten. The first beams of the rising sun, streaming across the tile-roofed buildings, tinge with glowing colors the domes and towers of an ancient church. In the distance, crowning all, towers the stately, snow-capped peak of Orizaba, the "Mountain of the Star," and the highest point in Mexico. Indeed, by the latest measurements, which place its altitude at 18,200 feet, it becomes, perhaps, with the exception of Mount McKinley, the loftiest mountain in North America, exceeding even Mount St. Elias.

20 Leaving Córdoba, the railway runs directly toward Mount Orizaba, and is bordered for many miles on either side by a constant succession of banana groves and coffee plantations. The contrast, as we raise our eyes from this profusion of tropical verdure to the snow and ice above, is strange and startling. But what, at first sight, is stranger still, is the fact that in summer the mountain is much whiter than in winter, as we see it now. Summer, in Mexico, is the rainy season. The mornings, as a rule, are bright and sunny, but each afternoon and evening brings a cooling and refreshing shower, which, on the mountain top, is turned to snow. This immaculate garment, however, during the long dry season from October to June, constantly exposed to the burning rays of a tropic sun, gradually shrinks and dwindles, although it never wholly disappears.

21 We are now passing through the great coffee zone of Mexico. This productive region, varying in width according to the steepness of the incline, lies along the slopes of the Cordilleras, at an elevation of from 3000 to 4000 feet, on both the Gulf and Pacific coasts. Coffee is one of the great staple productions of Mexico, and the the white buildings of the haciendas, embowered in palms and flowering plants, are a frequent sight as we traverse the coffee zone. One of the most extensive of these haciendas is near the station of Fortín, and while the train is waiting we will make a brief inspection. Passing through the imposing gateway we walk through spacious grounds, shaded by royal palms and variegated with fountains and the floral bloom of the tropics. On the left, surmounted by a tower and gilded cross, is the hacienda chapel, its interior beautifully decorated, and a veritable museum of art. The proprietor greets us courteously and conducts us through the establishment.

22 Within the hacienda walls great hoppers are filled with coffee berries, which, at a distance, look like cranberries. The machinery separates the pulp from the inside kernels, which, after being washed, are spread out in the sun to dry. The flat roofs of the hacienda buildings, and the great cemented floor of the patio, or inner courtyard, are used for this purpose. The coffee, spread out in thin layers, remains exposed to the sun until thoroughly dry, when it is scraped up in heaps, packed in bags, and is ready for shipment. Our illustration shows the coffee, spread out to dry in several sections of the patio, gathered into heaps in others, and in the lower right hand corner is a train of burros, waiting to convey it to the railroad station.

23 What the camel is to Egypt, the burro is to Mexico. Wherever one goes he encounters these patient and dignified little animals, which have acted as a substitute for wagons, canal-boats, and, until recently, even for railroads. The materials for all the great cathedrals of Mexico have been transported on the backs of burros. Mexico owes much to President Diaz, who brought order out of chaos; much to Juarez, who threw off the last shackle of royalty; a great deal to Hidalgo, who struck the first blow for independence; something even to Cortés, who achieved the conquest; but she also owes an incomputable debt to the burro, which, for four centuries, has patiently borne all her burdens.

24 Exactly midway in the vertical ascent from the coast to the tableland, on a level plain walled in on every side by towering mountains, lies the city of Orizaba. Our view is taken from the Cerro de Borrego, a hill on the outskirts of the city, where, in 1862, one hundred French Zouaves surprised and defeated between four and five thousand Mexicans. Beneath us, in the foreground, is the "Plaza de Toros,"



for every Mexican city of importance has its bull fights. Since leaving Vera Cruz we have traveled but eighty-two miles, although we have ascended more than 4000 feet. Owing to this altitude Orizaba has always been considered exempt from yellow fever, which, in summer, infests the cities lower down. On that account it is a great resort for all who can get away from the fever stricken cities of the coast.

- 25 Leaving Orizaba, we begin the final climb of 4000 feet to the Mexican plateau. Another locomotive, of peculiar construction, has been attached to our train, for an ordinary engine would be unable to overcome the steepness of the grades before us. This is a Fairlee locomotive, built in England, and its construction is on the same plan as that of Mexican matches: both ends are alike. When a Mexican asks you for a light he always returns the unused end of the match with a deferential bow, and a "muchas gracias, señor." The Mexican Railway, for the first half of the distance from Vera Cruz to the national capital, does not follow the route of Cortés, who ascended to the table-land further to the north, and on the opposite side of Mount Orizaba. But the scenic features of the railway route are far superior to the section which the conqueror traversed in his uneventful climb, and, after reaching the plateau, we shall pass through the various places made historic by his achievements.

- 26 At Maltrata we make a last stop to feed and water our tandem team of iron horses, before beginning the final test of their endurance in overcoming the steepest ascent of all. Reaching the top of the final terrace, let us for an instant take a backward glance below. Spread out beneath us, like the squares of some vast checker-board, are the streets and gardens of Maltrata. It lies more than 2000 feet beneath us, and, in an air line, less than two miles away, yet, to accomplish this ascent, we have squirmed and twisted and zigzagged more than five times that distance. The commodity offered the tourist by Maltrata Indians is mostly floral. When the descending train reaches Alta Luz, our present standpoint, the traveler is besieged by these aggressive peddlers and offered the most beautiful orchids. But do not be in a hurry to purchase, for, on arrival at Maltrata, 2000 feet below, you will find that these very Indians have taken the short cut and arrived before you, and the price of the orchids has dropped in direct ratio to the decrease in altitude.

- 27 On the edge of the table-land we stop at Esperanza, the dining station. What a contrast! Before us stretches a level plain, as far as the eye can reach, bordered on either side by lofty mountains. On the right is the culminating peak of Orizaba, now towering, white and glistening, far above the clouds, which, lower down, were wrapped about it like a mantle. In the rarefied atmosphere of the table-land, at this

altitude of 8000 feet, objects are defined so sharply that we are very much deceived as to their actual distance. The mountain before us, for example, which appears within the limits of a comfortable walk, is not less than thirty miles away.

28 Apizaco is the cane station. Incidentally, also, it is the junction where the road to Puebla branches off from the main line of the Mexican Railway. But it is for its canes that it is chiefly remembered by the tourist—canes of all sizes, shapes and colors; canes with snakes entwined around them, and canes embellished with queer looking Aztec carvings. Canes may be bought at many bazaars in Mexico, it is true, but nearly all of them come from Apizaco. The railway from Apizaco to Puebla follows approximately the route of Cortés, as he traversed the territory of Tlaxcala. This republic, it will be remembered, refused allegiance and tribute to Montezuma, and, what is more, had always maintained its independence.

29 Tlaxcala, probably more than any other city in Mexico, is replete with characteristic features and relics of the conquest. Most interesting among them is the old church of San Francisco, the oldest on this continent, founded in 1521. In the large chapel of Tercer Orden, opening from the nave, we see on the right the very pulpit from which the Christian faith was first preached on this continent. It bears this inscription: "Aquí tubo principio el Santo Evangelio en este nuevo mundo." (Here the Holy Evangel had its beginning in this new world.) The High Altar, beyond, is exceptionally rich in gilded carvings.

30 Turning now, and looking in the opposite direction, we have a near view of the pulpit on the left, and in the right-hand corner, near the entrance, we see a large stone font. This is an especially interesting relic, for, at this very font, in 1521, were baptized the four Tlaxcalan chiefs who were the first converts to Christianity in the new world. The intent of the Spanish cavalier was fully as much the conversion of the soul as the conquest of the body. No victory, therefore, could be considered complete until the conquered nation had discarded its idolatrous worship, and had accepted the true faith, no matter how sudden the change, or how violent the means of persuasion.

31 One of the sights of Tlaxcala is the Santuario de Ocotlán, standing upon a hill on the outskirts of the city. Here, soon after the conquest, according to tradition, a miraculous spring gushed forth, to reward the quest of a pious Indian, at the bidding of the Blessed Virgin. It has been, therefore, one of the most famous shrines in Mexico, and large sums of money have been lavished upon its embellishment. The front is ornamented with carved stonework of intricate design, flanked on either side with a surface of dark red tiles.

32 But the most famous and wonderful feature of the church is the interior, to the decoration of which the noted Indian sculptor, Francisco Miguel, devoted twenty-five years of laborious and painstaking work. Our illustration represents the ceiling of the camarín, taken with the camera on the floor and pointing directly upward. In the centre is a white dove, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, around which in a circle are polychrome figures of apostles, their feet resting on a circle of white and gold cloud. Below are marvelous and intricate designs in arabesque stucco, brilliantly colored, and revealing such consummate taste and talent as we can scarcely believe were possessed by a native Indian artist.

33 Nestling at the eastern base of Popocatepetl, the great volcano, its dwindling population scattered broadcast over a level plain, lies the ancient city of Cholula. Churches innumerable, that have risen since the conquest, are now deserted and crumbling in decay. Of the idolatrous Aztec temples, whose altar fires were brightly burning when the Spaniard came, we find no trace. But, although its traditions and associations are all of which the Cholula of today can boast, there is no place in Mexico more interesting to the archæologist. For, as we look beneath this crumbling arch, we see in the distance, surmounted by a modern church, a relic of an epoch before the Aztec—an artificial structure of unknown age and of mysterious origin.

34 Let us approach nearer, and obtain an unobstructed view of what appears to be a natural hill, but what is in reality an artificial mound, the great pyramid of Cholula. It is built of alternate layers of brick and clay, rises nearly 200 feet above the plain, and its base covers an area of forty-four acres, being twice as long as that of the great pyramid of Cheops. According to the traditions of the natives whom the Aztecs found on the plain of Cholula, it was built by a family of giants. These were descended from the two sole survivors of a great flood which overspread the land, and their design was to raise this structure to the skies. But the gods, offended at such presumption, sent fires from Heaven, which forced them to abandon the attempt. The coincidence of this tradition with the Chaldean and Hebrew accounts of the Deluge and Tower of Babel is striking, even the confusion of tongues having a parallel in the fact that more than 100 different dialects are spoken among the Mexican Indians of today.

35 When Cortés ascended the pyramid, and looked over the sacred city of Cholula, he counted 400 towers, yet no temple had more than two, and many only one. While the temples have disappeared, the domes and towers of nearly sixty Christian churches may now be counted from Cholula's pyramid. It is still a holy city, if, perchance, three-score deserted and crumbling buildings are any measure of true sanctity.



At the time of the conquest the pyramid of Cholula was surmounted by an Indian temple, dedicated to that mystic deity, Quetzalcoatl.

36 This divinity, as we here observe, was represented as a feathered serpent. In reality, however, he was a being of majestic and benignant mien, fair of face, and with a long, flowing beard. This exemplary deity taught the Cholulans arts and trades, strict morality, and a pure religion, free from human sacrifice. After a long sojourn among them he took leave of his followers at the shore of the Mexican Gulf, upon which he embarked and disappeared, promising, however, to return at some future time. His memory was deified by the Mexicans, who confidently looked for his return. To this tradition Cortés undoubtedly owed much of his success, for many of the superstitious Aztecs saw in his appearance the fulfilment of the prophecy. Montezuma himself shared this belief to some extent, but between his disinclination to lose his empire and his fear to offend the strangers, he adopted faint-hearted and half-way measures which were neither politic nor successful.

37 The view across the plain of Cholula is magnificent in the extreme. On the left we see the symmetrical, tapering cone of Popocatepetl, nearly 18,000 feet above sea level, and rising more than 10,000 feet above the plain. It was long considered the highest mountain in Mexico, but later measurements of Mount Orizaba have given Popocatepetl the second place. On the right appears the long, snow-crested ridge of Ixtaccíhuatl, the "white woman." Although Popocatepetl has long been quiescent, at the time of the conquest it was frequently in eruption, and while the Spaniards were at Tlaxcala it raged with uncommon fury. This was looked upon by the superstitious Aztecs as an evil omen for their destiny. From Cholula, the route of Cortés to the City of Mexico lay directly across the ridge before us, between these two mountain peaks. Beyond this mountain wall lies the famous Valley of Mexico, oval in shape, about sixty miles in length by thirty in breadth, and about 7500 feet above sea level. In its centre was formerly a large lake, many miles in extent, from the waters of which rose the Aztec capital. It is now 400 years since Cortés crossed this mountain wall and descended into this beautiful valley. Let us go back still another 200 years, to the year 1325, to be exact. The valley is uninhabited, and the only evidences of former dwellers are the scattered Toltec ruins, representing a civilization as far in the past as the Mexico of the twentieth century is in the future.

38 The early morning light shows a large band of Indians, who have just entered the valley from the north, following the shore of the lake. They are the Aztecs, and as they reach the southwestern border of the lake, they behold, perched on the stem of a thorny cactus,

growing in a crevice of a rock that is washed by the waves, a royal eagle of great size and beauty, with a serpent in his talons, and his broad wings opened to the rising sun. They hailed the auspicious omen as indicating the site of their future city, the construction of which was begun immediately. The settlement which they founded was called Tenochtitlan, meaning "cactus on a stone," and from this small beginning grew the mighty Aztec city which held sway over the length and breadth of Mexico for 200 years. The legend of its foundation is still perpetuated in the arms of the republic of modern Mexico, the device now before you on the screen, and showing the eagle with the snake, and the cactus on the rock.

39 At the time of the conquest the Tenochtitlan of the Aztecs, which is the present City of Mexico, was the Venice of the western hemisphere. The city was entirely surrounded by the waters of Lake Tezcuco, being only accessible by four great causeways, approaching the city from the four cardinal points. The picturesque Viga Canal, with its swarms of native boats and boatmen, now follows the line of the former southern causeway. This was the route over which Cortés and his army marched into the Aztec capital. In addition to the interesting historical associations of this locality, the Viga canal now constitutes one of the principal resorts for the population of the modern city. Let us, then, briefly consider its former environment, as well as its present aspect.

40 Along this southern approach, in Cortés' day, were the "Chinampas," or floating gardens. Prescott calls them "wandering islands of verdure, teeming with flowers and vegetation, and moving like rafts over the waters; rising and falling with the gentle undulations of the billows." They were composed of frames of reeds and rushes, bound tightly together and covered with the rich, alluvial mud from the bottom of the lake, thus forming floating islands, on which the Aztecs raised their vegetables. But the Chinampas no longer float. They are now merely extensive areas of vegetable gardens, intersected by a network of irrigating ditches radiating from the Viga canal. Along these ditches, into the Viga, and thence to the City of Mexico, the Indians pole their flatbottomed scows, laden with garden truck for the city markets. These same flat boats on fiestas, or holidays, are filled with pleasure seekers bound from the city to Ixtacalco, or to Santa Anita, the Coney Island of Mexico. On the Friday before Holy Week the Viga canal presents an unusually animated appearance.

41 It is the annual Paseo de las Flores, a traditional festival observed from time immemorial. It is maintained by some that it is an Indian custom, long antedating the conquest, to celebrate the coming of spring.

On this day of days the Viga becomes a veritable bower of floral beauty. Its surface, as may be seen in our picture, is strewn with flowers, and the various barges rival one another in the profusion of their decorations. Unfortunately for the American who has a nose, the Viga canal is no longer the limpid stream it was in Cortés' time. While it is not, as some people maintain, the sewage conduit of the city, yet, as the Mexicans say, "la fetidez es muy mala." But, while the odors are almost intolerable, especially when stirred up by the continual agitation incident to a fiesta, they do not in the least interfere with the picturesqueness.

42 As we get further away from the city, and the crowds, and the turmoil, out where the water, while by no means clear, has less the consistency of a solid and approaches more closely its normal liquid state, out where the banks are lined with trees, whose intersecting branches arch the stream—then the Viga canal really becomes a thing of beauty. From nearly every passing barge comes the soft music of the guitar, and through the interstices in the canopy of green rushes we catch glimpses of fair señoritas, their dark hair entwined with wreaths of ruddy poppies. Yes, the Viga is *sui generis*, and every visitor to Mexico should see it—once.

43 On Tuesday, November 8, 1519, Cortés and his army, accompanied by their Tlaxcalan allies, entered the city of Tenochtitlan. At last the conquistador realized the consummation of all for which he had schemed, prayed and fought, ever since he first set foot on the soil of Mexico at Vera Cruz. In seven short months he had traversed a hostile country, administered defeat after defeat to the fierce and warlike Tlaxcalans, and finally, having secured their friendship, made with them a peaceful entry into the Aztec capital. And in this great square before us the army of Cortés halted and looked upon their surroundings. Where now stands the great cathedral rose a lofty teocalli, second only to the pyramid of Cholula, and dedicated to the patron war god of the Aztecs.

44 On the summit of this truncated pyramid was a temple devoted to human sacrifice, and in the courtyard stood the sacrificial stone, a view of which is here presented, on which the prisoner was stretched. Five priests secured his head and his limbs, while the sixth, clad in a scarlet mantle, emblematic of his bloody office, despatched the victim with a sharp razor of itztlī—a volcanic substance, hard as flint—and cast his heart at the feet of the deity to whom the temple was devoted.

45 In the National Museum of the City of Mexico stands a huge and hideous two-faced monster, carved in stone. Mr. Bandelier, known and acknowledged as one of the foremost antiquarians of our day and

generation, after exhaustive research, affirms that this is none other than "the well-known war god of the Mexican tribe, Huitzilopochtli; and that, consequently, it was the famous principal idol of aboriginal Mexico, or Tenochtitlan." At the shrine of this sanguinary deity from 20,000 to 50,000 human beings were annually offered up in bloody sacrifice. Truly, as Prescott says, "The empire of the Aztecs did not fall before its time."

46 As we turn to leave the National Museum, we see, directly opposite the doorway, a curiously carved and ornamented block of stone. This has been the subject of much controversy among antiquarians, some declaring it to be simply an Aztec calendar stone, while others maintain that it served as a base for the smaller sacrificial stone. The carvings on the block, consisting of a central sun surrounded by a circle of twenty figures representing the twenty days of the Mexican month, certainly bear out the calendar idea, but it is the opinion of no less an authority than Mr. Bandelier that it was designed for the sacrificial stone to rest upon. As it was unearthed directly beneath the site of the ancient Aztec temple, this seems the most plausible interpretation.

47 It is not our purpose to narrate here the incidents of Cortés' stay in Tenochtitlan. The cruelties and barbarities practised by the Spaniards, together with the indignities offered to the weak and spiritless Montezuma, which ended with his untimely death, are fully recorded in Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico." Suffice it to say that, on July 1, 1520, the Aztecs rose in their might, and, with terrible slaughter, drove the detested Spaniards from the city. No wonder the hitherto undaunted spirit of the conqueror was broken by the terrors and disasters of the "melancholy night." On the outskirts of the city, at Popotla, stands this "tree of the Noche Triste." Here, as we are informed, the Spanish general stood and watched the straggling remnants of his army pass, while, unable to restrain his emotions, he covered his face with his hands, and, in the anguish of his soul, wept bitterly. But even as he wept his proud and indomitable spirit was already looking forward to the hour of vengeance.

48 On the site of the famous eastern causeway, where the greatest slaughter of the retreating Spaniards took place, has been erected the church of San Hipólito. The reconquest of the city having been consummated on August 13, 1521, the day of San Hipólito, the church was dedicated to that saint, and those who had lost their lives were commemorated as martyrs. Close by is the spot where Alvarado made his famous leap, a feat so apparently impossible as to excite the admiration of friend and foe alike. To this day the place is called "El Salto de Alvarado."



49 On the very spot formerly occupied by the Aztec temple now stands the Cathedral of Mexico, the largest church on the American continent. It faces the great central plaza of the city and occupies its entire northern side. In the corner nearest us is the Sagrario Metropolitano, with its elaborate Churrigüeresque façade, in reality a portion of the cathedral, although differing widely from it in architectural design. The fragmentary construction of the cathedral, covering, as it did, a period of more than 200 years, naturally caused a lack of harmony, and doubtless many changes from the original design. The two towers are each capped with a bell-shaped dome, and the white marble statues, friezes and capitals which adorn the façade are very elegant and harmonize effectively with the soft gray color of the masonry. The door of the cathedral is always open. Let us enter and view the interior.

50 Directly facing the main entrance is the Altar del Perdón. This is elaborately carved and gilded with figures in polychrome. Directly back of this altar extends the choir, which, following the custom in most Spanish cathedrals, occupies the central portion of the nave. This arrangement mars greatly an effect that would otherwise be imposing and majestic, as that portion of the nave not occupied by the choir is filled by the high altar and the railed passage connecting them. The choir stalls, together with the casings of the two great organs, are elaborately carved, and the woodwork has never been degraded by either paint or varnish.

51 The High Altar itself is out of harmony with its surroundings, and is far inferior to the original structure which it replaced. On the right is the pulpit, of Puebla onyx, and directly back of the high altar we have a glimpse of the superb altar and chapel of Los Reyes. This occupies the apse, and was the work of Balbas, designer of the high altar of the great cathedral of Seville, who came over from Spain expressly to do this work. Unfortunately this masterpiece, extending from floor to ceiling, could not be photographed to advantage, the high altar being directly in front and very near. Under the altar of Los Reyes are buried the heads of Hidalgo, Allende, Aldama and Jimenez, brought here after the independence for which they lost them had been secured.

52 One of the most superb views in Mexico is obtained from the cathedral tower. Directly beneath us lies the Plaza Mayor, and, facing it on the east, the National Palace, Capitol of the Republic of Mexico. This is one of the longest buildings in the world. In the central tower, shown on the extreme right, hangs the Liberty Bell of Mexico. In 1896 it was brought here from the church of Dolores, near San

Miguel de Allende, where, nearly 100 years before, it was rung by Hidalgo, the patriot priest, to call the people to arms, and to march, under the banner of Guadalupe, for the independence of Mexico. In the distance, eighty miles away, glisten the snow-capped peaks of Popocatepetl and Ixtaccíhuatl, white as the clouds which are gathering around their crests.

- 53 Of the many fine examples of sculpture in the City of Mexico, the most notable is the imposing equestrian statue of Carlos IV. of Spain. This was the masterpiece of the noted architect, Manuel Tolsa. Made in a single piece, it is the largest bronze casting in the world. A few years after its completion the popular feeling against the Spaniards became so bitter that the statue was encased in a wooden globe, as a protection against the patriotic Mexicans. Later, when the popular feeling had somewhat subsided, it was placed in its present position. As if in apology for placing the statue of the ignoble and detested Spanish monarch in one of the most honored positions in the city, the following significant inscription was cut upon the pedestal: "Con-servado como Obra del Arte," Preserved as a work of Art.
- 54 Extending in a straight line from the statue of Carlos IV. to the Castle of Chapultepec is the most beautiful driveway in Mexico, the Paseo de la Reforma. Throughout its length the Paseo is bordered on either side by a double row of trees. Between these rows extend the sidewalks, while at intervals, beneath the shade of the overhanging trees, are massive stone benches where one may sit and watch the endless succession of stylish turnouts. On Sunday afternoons the Paseo is the rendezvous of fashionable Mexico.
- 55 Here are caballeros in charro costume, resplendent in all the glory of silver trappings. Then come scores of handsome carriages, whose dark-eyed occupants smile and twirl their jeweled fingers as they recognize some acquaintance in the passing throng. Up one side of the splendid thoroughfare and down the other passes an endless procession, the two lines divided by a double row of mounted troopers, stationed every hundred yards or so, as mute and immovable as the bronze figure at the Paseo's entrance. The Mexicans owe this magnificent driveway to Carlotta, wife of the unfortunate Maximilian, who laid it out in imitation of the Champs-Élysées. Like that famous boulevard the Paseo has a number of circular parks, called glorietas, in which are erected statues.
- 56 The most notable of these is an impressive figure of the defiant Guatemotzin, nephew of Montezuma, and his successor on the throne of the Aztecs. Had Montezuma possessed one tenth the spirit of this dauntless chieftain the history of Mexico would have been far different.



His heroic defence of his capital, and refusal to surrender on the most honorable terms, was prolonged until, stone by stone, his capital had been obliterated, and, one by one, his followers killed. Even then, when finally captured and brought before Cortés, the proud Aztec addressed his conqueror thus: "Malintzi, I have done what I could in defence of this city and of my nation; take this dagger now and kill me!"

57 On the pedestal of the statue is a bas-relief representing the torture of Guatemotzin by the Spaniards, when, in order to compel him to reveal the hiding place of his treasure, they roasted his feet over a burning brazier. This contemptible action, the one foul blot on the memory of Cortés, failed to evoke so much as a groan from the dauntless captive, still less the desired information. Time and posterity, those two inexorable judges, have agreed upon a righteous verdict. Today Montezuma and Guatemotzin are household words in Mexico, and familiar to every child. Their portraits are seen on every hand, and their memory is immortal, but in all Mexico there is no monument to the conqueror, and no city, village, or even street, bears the detested name of Cortés.

58 The Paseo terminates at Chapultepec, the White House, and also the West Point, of Mexico. Crowning the summit of the hill is the residence of President Díaz, and directly back of it is the Military Academy, where the officers of the Mexican army are trained and educated. During the Mexican war the hill of Chapultepec was stormed and captured by the American forces under General Pillow. It was gallantly defended by its garrison of boy cadets, and at the foot of the hill is a monument to the memory of the bright and promising young heroes, who were worthy of a better fate.

59 The greatest glory of Chapultepec is its magnificent grove of ancient cypress trees. Under the shade of these very trees it is said that Montezuma and his retinue were wont to spend much of their time, discussing affairs of state. To this day, in fact, the largest and finest of the grove is known as Montezuma's Tree. Not far away is Malinche's Spring, and there is a legend to the effect that, in her subterranean caverns, this water sprite still guards the Aztec treasure, given to her for safe keeping by Guatemotzin, when he foresaw the downfall of his people. In the days of ancient Tenochtitlan, a causeway led thither from Chapultepec, and over this causeway an aqueduct conveyed the water from Malinche's Spring. After the city was rebuilt by the Spaniards a new aqueduct, of solid masonry, replaced the primitive Aztec structure.

60 Although this aqueduct has long been obsolete, the water supply of modern Mexico being carried beneath the ground in iron pipes, its two principal fountains have been preserved as historic monuments

One of these is this picturesque and quaint old fountain at the terminus of the former aqueduct in the City of Mexico. It is known as El Salto del Agua, "The Leap of the Water." Nearly every morning one may see here an array of vegetables brought from the gardens on the Viga, and kept fresh and bright all day by frequent sprinkling from the adjacent fountain. Although the more prosaic iron pipes now conduct the water to the patios of the more pretentious Mexican houses, the aguador still finds employment in carrying water from the public fountains; as Mexico's water supply is still inadequate.

61 In addition to the aguador, another early morning visitor is the lechero, or milkman. Of all Mexican itinerants he is the most picturesque and complacent. He sits upon the quarter-deck of his burro, resplendent in striped zerape and peaked sombrero, with his cans of "leche" covering every available square inch of the patient animal. To those who have had experience in riding Mexican burros, however, the wonder will be that his milk is not all butter by the time it is delivered. At his side trots his faithful partner, who delivers the requisite amount of milk to the portero of each residence. Although the average Mexican peons are indeed poor, they are happy and contented, and every one who knows Mexico knows also that they get quite as much enjoyment out of life as do the American "turistas," who are so prone to pity them.

62 The average American indeed, who goes flitting through the country in a personally conducted excursion party, gets a very erroneous idea of Mexico and the Mexicans. He sees nothing of the better class of people, especially the ladies, for they rarely appear on the streets or in public conveyances. The old saying, "A man's house is his castle," was never so true as in Mexico. Privacy is the watchword, and the houses, with their barred and grated windows, look like prisons from without. But if you are so fortunate as to obtain an introduction to these people, and meet them in their homes, you will be royally entertained, and will learn what Mexican courtesy and politeness really mean. The feature of the Mexican house is the patio, or inner court. Here, in the very heart of a great city, one has the delights of a private park in the open air, variegated with fountains, plants and flowers, where afternoon tea may be served with an accompaniment of singing birds. And when you take your leave your host will say: "Esta es su casa de Vd., y somos sus criados," "This is your house, and we are your servants."

63 Of the patio on a large scale we have a fine example in this view, showing the cloisters of what was formerly the Colegio de San Ildefonso, but which is now the Escuela Preparatoria Nacional. Whatever

profession the Mexican youth desires to enter, with the exception of the army, navy, or priesthood, he must first take a four years' course at the National Preparatory School. This school accommodates about 1000 pupils, and the tuition is free, to foreigners as well as Mexicans. The collection of trees and shrubbery in the three patios of this great institution is doubtless the finest in the city.

64 But the most valuable and artistic possessions of the Preparatory School are the magnificently carved choir stalls in the Ceremonial Hall. They are from the choir of the old convent of San Agustín, and originally cost a quarter of a million dollars. Mr. Sylvester Baxter, in his superb work on Mexican architecture, says of them, "These exquisitely beautiful choir stalls are one of the great artistic sights of Mexico, and are comparable in charm with the best of similar work in Europe. That they were wrought by native Mexican hands is apparent from certain touches of local color in various reliefs, such as the depiction of monkeys and other tropical animals in scenes like the Garden of Eden, including the famous Mexican bird, the Guajamaya."

65 Nearly all the carvings illustrate some event in Bible history, and these two panels represent Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In the panel on the left they are standing beneath the tree of the "knowledge of good and evil," and Eve is offering to Adam the forbidden fruit, while the serpent, coiled about a limb of the tree above, looks down in silent approbation. In the right hand panel the angel with the flaming sword is expelling the unhappy pair from Paradise. Other panels depict the Deluge, the story of Jonah and the whale, and other important incidents in Scripture narrative, ending with the Apocalypse.

66 Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación was the most magnificent of all the convents in Mexico. Its beautiful great cloister still remains intact, and reveals the elegance to which convent life was carried in Mexico until the laws of the reform put an end alike to convents and monasteries. After the suppression of the religious orders, and the secularization of their property, this portion of the immense building became the National School of Law. It is, perhaps, the finest specimen of the patio extant in Mexico. No one would imagine, in looking upon the exterior of this building, that within its gloomy and forbidding walls such a beautiful and delightful spot could possibly exist. In marked contrast to this paradise is the patio of our hotel.

67 This was formerly a portion of the headquarters of the Franciscan order, the oldest and greatest monastery in Mexico, which was built on the site of Montezuma's garden and menagerie. From our nocturnal experiences while domiciled here, however, we decide to name it "El Patio de los Gatos," The Courtyard of the Tom-cats. The wall

before us conceals what was once the entrance and façade of the main church of San Francisco. On the right is the base of the demolished tower, still bearing the marks of the cannonade at the time of the intervention. On the left appears one of the three typical domes, which still remain intact.

68 For a view of these, however, we must ascend to the roof of the ancient structure. Mexico is preeminently a land of domes. As Mr. Baxter says: "Probably no other country in the world, outside the Orient, has so many domes—domes in the truest sense of the word, arched with solid masonry." This beautiful and picturesque group represents a typical form of the Mexican dome, such as may be seen literally by the hundred throughout the country. Upon the largest dome the original glazed tiles still remain intact, reflecting Mexico's perpetual sunshine in countless prismatic tints. As our eyes rest upon these domes, which surmount the structure for so many years the tomb of Cortés, may we not, in imagination, recall the image of the conqueror as he appeared in life.

69 In forming our opinion of this great commander we must consider the time in which he lived. It has been said that he was cruel, unscrupulous and insincere; that he made war upon the pagan tribes of the new world with sword in one hand and cross in the other, and in the assurance of his bigotry raised the hand that was red with the blood of the natives to invoke the blessing of Heaven on his cause. But in our study of contemporaneous history, and especially Spanish history, we find him far in advance of his age and his people.

70 After Cortés had completely demolished the capital of the Aztecs, he set about the reconstruction, on its site, of what is now the City of Mexico. While engaged in the supervision of this work he established his seat of government at Coyoacán, a suburb of Mexico, where his residence, now the Municipal Palace, is still standing. Over the entrance to this old dwelling, as may be seen in our illustration, is a stone shield on which is engraved the conqueror's coat of arms. This building exemplifies the massiveness and solidity which characterized the architecture of the Spanish at the very outset of their occupation of the country.

71 Far more imposing and elaborate, however, is the residence built by Cortés at Cuernavaca. Our picture shows the western entrance, which faces a charming little plaza, but the building has been so modernized that only the beautiful arcades are now of interest. Although Cortés had completed the conquest he was not to enjoy the fruits of his labors. Like Columbus before him, having achieved an exploit unparalleled in history, he found himself shorn of his legitimate reward.



Like Columbus he had the misfortune to deserve too much. So the conqueror of Mexico saw its control pass into other hands, and even his own military jurisdiction was curtailed and interfered with. This was more than the proud and independent spirit of Cortés could endure. After submitting, for a time, to these indignities, he left the City of Mexico, never to return, and retired to private life in this stately castle at Cuernavaca.

72 If we pass beneath these central arches, ascend the stairway, and emerge upon the eastern arcade, this is what we see. Mr. Frederick E. Church, one of the greatest scenic painters America has yet produced, justly termed it one of the world's noblest landscapes. At our feet lies a foreground of tropical luxuriance, diversified with such romantic and picturesque environment as can be found only in Mexico. Beyond extends a far-reaching vista of plain, and rugged, rocky headland, while in the distance, culminating all, are the snow-capped summits of Popocatepetl and Ixtaccíhuatl. From exactly the opposite direction we looked upon the further side of these same mountains from Cholula's pyramid. They overlooked the scenes associated with the earliest achievements of the conqueror. These associations must have been strongly recalled to his mind as, toward the close of life, his work accomplished, he daily walked this balcony.

73 The figure of the conquistador, pacing back and forth upon these arcades, looking off toward the great volcano, and in memory beholding the scenes which it recalled of his stormy past, is one which appeals powerfully to our imagination. A poet might do worse than attempt to portray in verse the analogy between the stern old warrior and this grim sentinel of the land he conquered. For it, too, was near extinction. The fierce fires of its wonted activity were smouldering low and well-nigh extinguished. Its forehead was whitened with the snows of many storms that had left deep scars behind them.

74 And as, toward the close of a summer's day, the clouds gather around its storm-swept peak, so the swiftly forming clouds of adversity even then were enshrouding the conqueror's life. And as the increasing gloom presently veils the mountain completely from our sight, the curtain falls upon the conqueror's final exit. After a weary and fruitless pilgrimage to Spain, in the vain attempt to secure justice at the hands of his sovereign, the broken-hearted and disappointed old man passed away in the city of Seville. Like Columbus, his services, to the last, were unappreciated and unrequited. Perhaps in a better world they may both receive the recompense that was denied to them in this.

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